

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 PC-01 /074 W
-----091822Z 098729 /53

R 091115Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1487
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PK
SUBJECT: POLITICAL SITUATION IN PAKISTAN

REF: ISLAMABAD 4637

1. SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO REITERATED HIS CALL
FOR THE OPPOSITION PAKISTAN NATIONAL ALLIANCE (PNA) LEADERS
TO REDUCE THEIR DEMANDS TO FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES. HE SAID
FOUR OR FIVE CABINET MINISTERS WOULD MEET WITH PNA LEADERS
AT SIHALA TO SETTLE PRELIMINARY MATTERS REGARDING OPPOSITION
PROPOSALS, BUT THAT HE HIMSELF WOULD CONDUCT THE FINAL

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NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE OPPOSITION. THE PM NOTED THAT NOW
THAT THE OPPOSITION HAS AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO A DIALOGUE,
THE POLITICAL PROCESS HAD REACHED A NEW STAGE. BHUTTO ALSO
DISCLOSED THAT THE CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER IS ILL AND
THAT A NEW ONE WILL BE APPOINTED. PIR OF PAGARO ANNOUNCED
THAT THE PNA LEADERSHIP REJECTED THE IDEA OF MEETING THE
CABINET MINISTERS AND WILL PRESENT A DETAILED WRITTEN REPLY

TO THE PM'S LATEST COMMENTS. WHILE TALK OF TALKS CONTINUES, GOP AND PRESS CONTINUED THEIR ATTACK ON PNA LEADER ASGHAR KHAN, HINTING THAT THE GOP MAY CHARGE HIM WITH TREASON. IN A SIGN OF "NORMALCY" PRIMARY SCHOOLS HAVE NOW OPENED IN ALL FOUR PROVINCES. ANTI-AMERICAN ITEMS IN PAKISTANI PRESS MAINTAINED A STEADY BY LOW LEVEL OVER THE WEEKEND. END SUMMARY

2. PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO ENDED HIS MAY 7-8 VISIT TO LAHORE WITH A PRESS CONFERENCE IN WHICH HE AGAIN SAID THAT THERE IS ROOM FOR DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE GOP AND THE PAKISTAN NATIONAL ALLIANCE (PNA), BUT THE OPPOSITION DEMANDS MUST BE REDUCED TO "MANAGEABLE, RELEVANT, ESSENTIAL AND FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES." THIS WAS A REITERATION OF HIS INITIAL REACTION TO PNA DEMANDS REPORTED REFTEL. BHUTTO STATED THAT FOUR OR FIVE FEDERAL CABINET MINISTERS WOULD VISIT OPPOSITION LEADERS AT SIHALA AFTER THE SCHEDULED MAY 10 PPP PARLIAMENTARY PARTY MEETING; THEY WILL SEEK TO SETTLE CERTAIN PRELIMINARY MATTERS REGARDING THE OPPOSITION'S 32 DEMANDS IN ORDER TO FACILITATE A FINAL SETTLEMENT. THE PM ADDED THAT THE FINAL NEGOTIATIONS WOULD TAKE PLACE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND THE OPPOSITION. HE CALLED ON THE PNA TO STOP URGING THEIR FOLLOWERS TO DEMONSTRATE AND DEFO MARTIAL LAW AND CURFEW. THE PM NOTED THAT BECAUSE THE OPPOSITION, BY SUBMITTING THEIR 32 PROPOSALS, HAD AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO A DIALOGUE, THE PHASE OF THE ELECTIONS AND CONFRONTATION HAD PASSED AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS HAD REACHED A NEW STAGE.

3. PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO DISCLOSED AT HIS MAY 8 PRESS CONFERENCE THAT CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER SAJJAD AHMED JAMFN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FORMER CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT, WILL DEPART PAKISTAN FOR HEALTH REASONS AND A NEW CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER WILL BE APPOINTED. JAN LATER CONFIRMED THIS IN AN INTERVIEW AND STATED THAT HE HAS AN ULCER CONDITION THAT REQUIRES TREATMENT. HE PLANS TO REMAIN ON DUTY UNTIL MAY 21.

4. PNA ACTING PRESIDENT PIR OF PAGARO ANNOUNCED TO NEWSMEN MAY 8 THAT THE PNA LEADERSHIP HAS REJECTED BHUTTO'S PROPOSAL OF MEETING FIRST WITH A FEW CABINET MINISTERS. HE SAID THE PNA LEADERSHIP WILL PRESENT A DETAILED WRITTEN REPLY TO THE PM'S LATEST COMMENTS. HE TOLD REPORTERS THAT THERE IS NO REASON WHY PNA LEADERS JAILED AT SIHALA SHOULD MEET WITH CABINET MINISTERS AS THE PM SUGGESTED. THE ACTING PRESIDENT

MAINTAINED THAT OF THE 32 POINTS IN THE PNA'S LIST OF PROPOSALS, THERE ARE ONLY TWO OR THREE BASIC ISSUES. THE REMAINDER RELATE TO GRIEVANCES. HE ADDED THAT THE PNA WILL NOT DISCUSS FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES, BUT TALKS ARE POSSIBLE ABOUT IMPLEMENTATION OF A SETTLEMENT, THE POSITION

AND
POWERS OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION, AND THE APPOINTMENT OF
GOVERNORS. PIR SAHEB COMMENTED THAT ALTHOUGH THE CHIEF
ELECTION COMMISSIONER HAS ANNOUNCED HE IS GOING ABROAD FOR
MEDICAL TREATMENT, WHEN THE PNA COMES TO POWER THEY WILL
RECALL HIM FROM WHEREVER HE IS AND TRY HIM.

5. MORE TALKS HAVE TAKEN PLACE BETWEEN PNA LEADERS AND
FOREIGN AMBASSADORS. THE SAUDI AMBASSADOR VISITED PNA LEADERS
AT SIHALA MAY 7 AND 8; THE LIBYAN AMBASSADOR MET WITH THEM ON

MAY 8.

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 PC-01 /074 W
-----100300Z 106580 /62

R 091115Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1488
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL LAHORE
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C O R R E C T E D C O I Y OF TEXT (PARA 7 AND 8)

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6. WHILE TALK OF TALKS CONTINUES, THE GOVERNMENT AND PRESS
CONTINUE THEIR ATTACK ON PNA LEADER AIR MARSHAL (RETD)
ASGHAR KHAN. THE PRIME MINISTER TOLD REPORTERS MAY 8 THAT

NO ONE IS ABOVE THE LAW AND ANYONE SEEKING TO DISAFFECT THE
ARMED FORCES IS GUILTY OF SUBVERTING THE CONSTITUTION.
THIS WAS IN REFERENCE TO ASGHAR KHAN'S LETTER TO MILITARY
LEADERS REPORTED EARLIER. WITHOUT DIRECTLY ANSWERING QUESTIONS
WHETHER THE GOP ACTUALLY INTENDS TO TRY ASGHAR KHAN FOR
TREASON, THE PM STATED IT IS A VERY SERIOUS OFFENSE COVERED
BY THE CONSTITUTION AND LAWS THAT HAVE BEEN FLAGRANTLY VIOLATED.

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7. THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO GIVE THE APPEARANCE THE NATION
IS RETURNING TO NORMALCY. WITH THE OPENING OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS
IN PUNJAD ON MAY 9, THE LOWER LEVEL INSTITUTIONS HAVE REOPENED
IN ALL FOUR PROVINCES NOW. HOWEVER, MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS
AS WELL AS COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES REMAINED CLOSED IN AL
PROVINCES.

8. ANTI-AMERICAN ITEMS IN PAKISTANI PRESS MAINTAINED A STEADY
BUT LOW LEVEL OVER THE WEEKEND. THE SUNDAY PAKISTAN TIMES
CONTAINED AN ARTICLE "BACK TO '65 WITH A VENGEANCE" BY HK. BURKI
AND A FRONT PAGE FEATURE ARTICLE IN THE MAGAZINE SECTION
"CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF FOREIGN INTERVENTION." SATURDAY THROUGH
MONDAY'S PAKISTAN TIMES, AS WELL AS MAJOR URDU PAPERS WE
RECEIVE, CARRIED PLEDGES OF SUPPORT FOR THE PM FROM VARIOUS

LOCAL LEADERS. HOWEVER, FOREIGN AGENCY PLACEMENT REMAINED
MINIMAL AND THE MAJOR URDU PAPERS DID NOT CARRY ANY OF THE
FEATURE ITEMS FOUND IN THE PRESS TRUST-OWNED PAKISTAN TIMES.
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Message Attributes

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